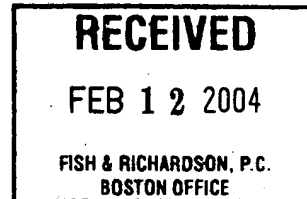


IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant : William Clune
Serial No. : 09/808,645
Filed : March 14, 2001
Title : FOLDED FASTENER PRODUCTS

Art Unit : 3626
Examiner : J. Brittain

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450



Handwritten signature: H. Jones 3-1-04

RECEIVED
FEB 26 2004

DECLARATION BY GEORGE A. PROVOST

GROUP 3600

I, George A. Provost, declare as follows:

1. I have been employed by the Velcro companies since March 1967 in their Research and Development (R&D) department. Since 1985, I have been Director of Product Research. Prior to that I held the position of Director of Product Application and Development (PAD) from the late 1970s to 1985. PAD at that time was part of the R&D department and worked closely with people in marketing to develop products for particular applications.
2. I received a Bachelor of Arts degree with a major in mathematics and minors in physics and philosophy in 1965. I also had two years of post-graduate work in physics during which I held a teaching assistantship from 1965 to 1967.
3. I have over thirty-five years of experience in design and manufacture of various types of hook and loop fasteners. These include both textile fasteners, in which the hooks are formed by cutting the sides of loops that have been woven into and extend upward

CERTIFICATE OF MAILING BY FIRST CLASS MAIL

I hereby certify under 37 CFR §1.8(a) that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail with sufficient postage on the date indicated below and is addressed to the Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.

February 17, 2004
Date of Deposit
Nancy Bechet
Signature
Nancy Bechet
Typed or Printed Name of Person Signing Certificate

from one side of a fabric tape which acts as a base, and molded fasteners, in which hooks are integrally molded on a sheet-form base. In the 1970s, a continuous molding system was developed for forming molded fastener products. This system included molds with moving parts that opened up to release the hooks after they had been formed in the mold. In the 1980s a so-called "continuous forming method" (CFM) was developed; this method is described in U.S. Patent No. 4,794,028 and employs molds that do not have moving parts.

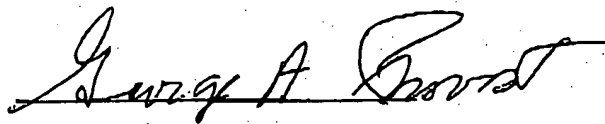
4. I have reviewed and am familiar with U.S. Serial No. 09/808,645 ("the '645 application"), which involves continuously molding a sheet-form base having a multiplicity of molded fastener element stem portions extending integrally from the base, while continuously molding a non-planar undulation that extends longitudinally along a longitudinal direction of a base. I have also reviewed the Hilston, Suenega and Roe references, cited by the Examiner in the office action mailed November 18, 2003.

5. At the time of the invention, those of skill in the fastener art would have expected to encounter significant technical difficulties in attempting to combine the teachings of Hilston, Suenega and Roe. In the process described by Suenaga, fastener elements, or the stems of fastener elements, are molded in discrete cavities extending from the surface of a mold roll. It is well known in the art that such a method for forming male fastener products, while extremely cost effective, is also very sensitive to variations in molding parameters that can effect proper stem formation, cooling, and extraction. Resin flow rates, temperatures and pressures must be maintained at proper levels in the molding region to form useful fastener element stems. Thus, at the time of the invention I believe that those of skill in the fastener art would have doubted that a significant modification -- such as the introduction of the undulation-forming process described by Roe -- could be made to the Suenaga process without interfering with proper stem formation.

7. Moreover, one skilled in the art would have considered forming undulations during a continuous stem-forming process to be problematic due to the complexity of the tooling that would be required to form stems and undulations side-by-side. For example, while nesting features on the opposed mold rolls would be required to form undulations, proper stem formation generally requires a flat surface opposite the stem molding cavities at a predetermined spacing from the cavities. Additionally, someone of skill in the art would have been concerned that it would be difficult to control the amount of plastic delivered to the gap between the mold rolls so as to provide sufficient resin to fill the molding cavities while also providing a sufficiently thin web to allow undulations to be simultaneously formed.

8. I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patents issued thereon.

Date: 2/12/04



George A. Provost